



Department of Justice

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Eastern District of California

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IDENTITY THIEF GETS 3 ½ YEARS IMPRISONMENT AFTER BEING CAUGHT ON VIDEO AT THUNDER VALLEY CASINO

SACRAMENTO—Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown announced today that CLAUDIU HOTEA, 35, of Riverside was sentenced today by United States District Judge Morrison C. England to 3 ½ years imprisonment, a five-year term of supervised release, and \$17,000 in restitution.

This case is the product of an extensive/joint investigation by the U.S. Secret Service and the Placer County Sheriff's Office.

On January 25, 2006, HOTEA was arrested after having used Starbucks gift cards to make withdrawals from ATMs at Thunder Valley Casino. On April 4, 2008, a jury found the defendant guilty of bank fraud, access device fraud, and aggravated identity theft. At the time of the offense, HOTEA was on supervised release from federal court in Riverside. In addition to the sentence imposed today, HOTEA may face up to two additional years imprisonment from the Riverside court.

According to Assistant United States Attorneys Matthew D. Segal and Robin Taylor, who prosecuted the case, Judge England, during a sentencing hearing noted that the quality of the video surveillance at Thunder Valley Casino was excellent and that the casino was a particularly foolish place in which to commit crime.